

# UPDATE

## Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

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*A Message from The President and Board of Directors . . .*

## The New Year is off to a great start!

by Matt Olivi

At this point, we're all ready for the snow to melt so that we can get back to business. Many of us use the off-season to educate ourselves at seminars, re-evaluate our field maintenance programs and decide what changes we should implement. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey does the same evaluation every year. The winter months are a great time to reflect on what we've accomplished and identify areas where we may need improvement. Your feedback has been invaluable in helping the Board of Directors allocate chapter resources to best serve the needs of the SFMANJ membership.

A key source of recent feedback for our organization has been the insight of Bernard Luongo. Bernard is the Lead Groundsman, Northern Burlington County Regional School District. Over the past year he has steadily increased his involvement with SFMANJ. Bernard has assisted the Board of Directors in planning Field Day events and educational seminars and has become a regular contributor to our quarterly newsletter. His great personality, positive energy and enthusiasm to better himself as a field manager should be an example and inspiration to all of us. The Board of Directors feels that Bernard's Leadership characteristics make him the perfect candidate to fill a recently opened Board position. As a result, it was decided that Bernard be appointed to the SFMANJ Board of Directors. Please join me in welcoming him to his new leadership role within the organization.

Another recent change to our Board of Directors was the appointment of Director Rich Watson to the role of Vice President. Rich will be succeeding long-time SFMANJ Vice President Fred Castenschiold who has served our organization since its inception and will be remaining on the SFMANJ Board of Directors. Our sincere thanks go to Fred for his long-time commitment and service to SFMANJ. His leadership and professionalism have been an example for all of us working in the Sports Field Industry. The Board of Directors is confident that Rich Watson will maintain the level of leadership and commitment that Fred has established.

The Board of Directors and I want to take this opportunity to give you a little background on Rich Watson, our new SFMANJ Vice President. Rich's efforts and dedication to the Sports Field Industry were recently recognized nationally at the 2014 Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference and Exhibition held in January 2014 in San Antonio, TX. We're proud to announce that Rich Watson was awarded the STMA Dick Ericson Founders Award.

Sports Turf Managers Association established the Dick Ericson Award and is awarded annually to someone who plans and executes sports turf management at their facility, who effectively leads their team to accomplish their goals in field maintenance, and who positively impacts the sports turf industry. Dick Ericson was a Founder



Larry Mayerowitz, SFMANJ Member and 2013 Field of the Year recipient was recognized at the monthly meeting of the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders on December 19, 2013. Pictured (l-r): Scott Bills, CSFM; Matt Olivi, President, SFMANJ; Larry Mayerowitz, Middlesex County Parks; Charles Tomaro, Middlesex County Freeholder; Brad Park, Rutgers University; Charles Kenney, Middlesex County Freeholder. Photo courtesy of Mary Mayerowitz

of STMA, served as the Association's first President (1981-82) and in addition to his own sports turf management activities, he has made significant contributions to STMA.

The SFMANJ Board authored a letter to STMA in October 2013 to nominate Rich for the Ericson Award. The nomination letter detailed Rich's strengths as a sports field manager at Pine Hill Public Schools and recalled that Phil Anastasia from philly.com wrote the following about Overbrook High School's Main Football field in 2009, "Which school has the best football field in South Jersey? ... the real stuff, the genuine grass ... I'm voting for Overbrook ... what a field. I was there Saturday when Overbrook played Gateway and I was amazed by Overbrook's field. The grass is lush. It's like a carpet ... This is an excellent field. I'm calling it the best in South Jersey."

The nomination letter described Rich's activity in sharing his knowledge with his colleagues at all levels, including his participation as an instructor in the Skin Surface Selection and Management Continuing Education course at Rutgers University, as a speaker at the Annual STMA Conference, New Jersey State League of Municipalities, New Jersey Green Expo,

